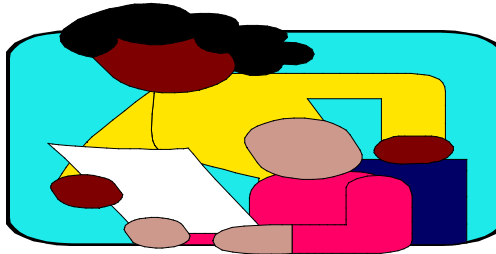


Structuring Classroom Experiences for Success

Proactive Management Strategies



Employing proximity

Understanding the problem *When the cat's away...the mice will play*

Likewise, the greater the distance between teacher and students, the more likely students will engage in disruptive behaviors. When students do misbehave, the teacher often has to disrupt the flow of instruction to deal with behavior problems. One of the best preventive measures is maintaining close proximity to students, especially students who are prone to misbehave.

When teachers do not use proximity to monitor students' behavior, they are at risk of being unaware of possible disruptions. This lack of awareness may encourage students to engage in undesirable behaviors and become less productive. Ultimately, the connections between the teacher and the learners become compromised and characterized by frustration and tension.

A key to the solution

Physical presence is a powerful way to shape students' desirable behaviors and prevent disruptive ones. This approach to systematic monitoring uses proximity to communicate teacher awareness. It provides a signal to students that you are interested and invested in their performance. It also helps to ensure a group focus thereby maximizing academic learning time.

A positive classroom environment can be facilitated by the effective use of teacher movement in the classroom. Physical proximity can be used to communicate caring and concern. For example, the teacher can use his presence to subtly redirect a student to return to an assigned task or to quietly praise a student for demonstrating perseverance in solving a difficult algorithm.

Management Tips...

Step 1 Consider the physical arrangement of your classroom space. Create a floor plan to illustrate the layout. Decide what needs to be changed to facilitate movement. Begin by asking yourself if there are any obvious barriers that obstruct movement. For example, are the desks too close together to allow you to move freely amongst them?

Step 2 Reflect on your patterns for using proximity. Do you usually move around the classroom during the instructional activity or do you tend to stay in one place? If you are unaware of your current patterns, ask a colleague to observe you to sketch your movement.

Step 3 Prior to instructional activities, generate a plan for employing physical proximity. It should be strategic based upon planned instructional formats and the dynamics of students' past behavior.

Step 4 Implement the plan and evaluate its effectiveness. It is important to remember that the plan is formulated ahead of time, so you need to monitor and adjust it during instruction to respond to students' behavioral and

instructional needs. Group dynamics are fluid and constantly changing. As a result, your plan needs to be flexible to consistently promote high rates of active student engagement. Effective use of movement management or proximity requires repeated practice and ongoing evaluation.

For example ...

Total time: 55 minutes

Beginning of the lesson Review what students already know about DNA replication and cell division using response cards (approximately 10 minutes). *Students will need 30-60 seconds of think time before displaying their response cards.* Continually circulate among rows during this activity.

During the lesson – Students will use a cooperative learning activity to construct a timeline of important DNA replication and cell division events that have occurred in the past 10 years (approximately 35 minutes). Monitor groups and assign roles and responsibilities.

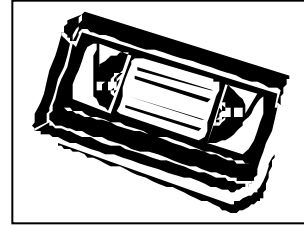
There are 7 groups of 5 students. Spend approximately 5 minutes with each group. Be sure to make physical contact with each group.

End of the lesson – Students will use a Think Pair Share activity to predict how our past, present, and future knowledge of DNA replication and cell division will impact our society in the new millennium. (approximately 10 minutes) Provide students with 3-5 minutes for thinking time, 2-3 minutes for exchanging responses with a partner, and 2-3 minutes for selected pairs to share thoughts with the large group.

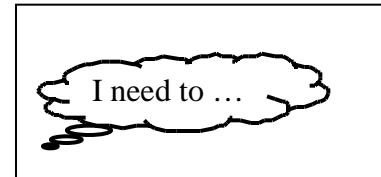
Move from the front of the classroom to the right side, then the back, and end up on the left side by the door to dismiss students for their next class.

Jazzing It Up

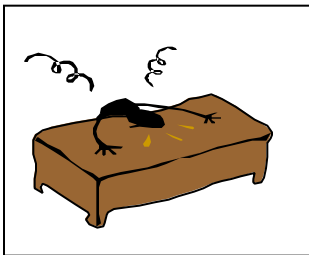
1. Videotape a series of lessons to objectively establish goals to increase your effective use of physical proximity. Look for patterns in your movement. Do you tend to stand in the front of the classroom? If you are using movement, do you gravitate towards some students and not others? Your goals should encourage you to move beyond your comfort zone.



2. Use self-talk to encourage continued movement in the classroom. For example, *I've been standing at the front of the room for a while. I need to move towards the back to draw those students into the discussion.*



3. If possible, rearrange the physical layout of the classroom on a periodic basis. This helps to create an interesting aesthetic environment. Ensure that new designs allow for easy- and free-flowing movement.
4. If you tend to fall into the “behind the desk” trap, remove your chair during class times to discourage yourself from this alienating practice. Many students and administrators characterize teachers who spend a great deal of time at their desks as being uninterested, disengaged, and unresponsive to students’ needs. To avoid these assumptions simply remove the temptation. If you need to sit down for medical or physical reasons, consider using a physician’s stool that is easy to maneuver around the classroom.



What's Next?

Additional tactics you can use to make positive or desired student behavior(s) happen include ...

Warmly providing assistance

Using an appropriate instructional pace

Using remembering cues about expectations

Using redirection

Maintaining format flexibility

Conducting smooth-sailing transitions

Management Tool Box

Tactics for use DURING a lesson